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July 27, 1965

Editor
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco, California

Dear Sir:

Several recent news stories have coupled the disappearing local landscape with pressures from real estate taxes, especially under equalized assessments.

The community should respond to this, but in a way that averts unfair enrichment and encourages the long term dedication of part of the land for the conservation of natural beauty. May I suggest legislation that would suspend part of the tax on dedicated lands. The tax should be suspended, not forgiven; the suspended taxes plus interest would remain as a lien on the land against any future subdivision. This would accumulate a vested interest in keeping it dedicated. Those landowners who complain that high assessments based on market value are forcing them to sell out should welcome this relief. The nominal market value of the land, hence its vulnerability to estate and further land taxes, will also adjust itself in response to the restriction. Some further penalty, say a few years' taxes, might be considered if more reinforcement is needed.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

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